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"An *immoral* act *must originate* in the immoral agent; a physical effect is not *known to originate* in its physical cause." Matter, inorganic and organic, presupposes mind; but the reverse is not equally true. The conscience and the religious consciousness in man are the starting point of religion within us. It is no more true of religion than it is of science, with its presupposition of order and purpose in nature, that it is a "leap in the dark in faith and hope." "Self-determining intelligence and responsibility for what is personally determined, seems to contradict the presupposed universality of natural causation, and puts us face to face with an originative cause, as that to which alone power is rightly attributed." This is a pregnant sentence. The observations of Professor Fraser on the partial comprehensibleness of that with which both cosmic faith and religious faith are concerned and which attaches, therefore, to both natural science and to theism, are extremely interesting and suggestive. In this notice of these valuable lectures nothing more has been attempted than to present their claims to the attention of all earnest inquirers into the philosophic basis of faith in the fundamental doctrines of religion.

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SCIENCE DES RELIGIONS DU PASSÉ, ET DE L'AVENIR, DU JUDAÏSME ET DU CHRISTIANISME. Par F. RÉTHORÉ. Paris. 1894.

No detailed account of this book is necessary to give a clear conception of the task which the author has set for himself, and of the manner in which he has accomplished it. Let it be noticed that the title announces a "scientific" rather than a historical or philosophical treatment of religious phenomena. The distinction is defined in an introduction of two pages on the "Plan and End of this Work." *History*, . . . . "by the aid of observation, establishes, describes, and coördinates the religious phenomena." *Science*, "by the aid of the critical history, ascends to the origins of these phenomena, examines the laws to which they are subject, compares and pronounces upon them." Then *philosophy*, "by the aid of the psychological and rational method, separates and selects the irreducible elements of religious thought, studies them in their genesis and logical development; but above all estimates them from the point of view of their certitude as well objective as subjective; or, in other words, evinces the principles of knowledge, of faith, and of doubt, upon the subject-matter of religion." There is something to commend itself in this way of

making the distinction; although the separate place for a so-called science of religion is much the most difficult both to find and satisfactorily to fill. But this is just the self-appointed task of the author of this book.

As to the spirit in which the task is undertaken, and the method which will be followed, we are not left in doubt. A serious and critical study of religious phenomena is proposed; and that method is to be followed which contemplates all the history of humanity as falling under causes and laws—a development occurring under the inevitable conditions of space and time. Indeed, this “rational method” does for religion what the applications of algebra and geometry have done for the mathematical sciences. Its discoverer and most masterly exponent was Voltaire, to whom the “learned and profound Buckle” gave the credit of writing one of the greatest books of the eighteenth century, and the best book on the subject up to the present time. By English readers the French critic of all religions is today so little known at first hand that few will be able to justify the dissent they will inevitably feel from this estimate of Voltaire. There are many more of these readers, however, who will intelligently reject M. Réthoré’s high estimate of Buckle and his *History of Civilization*.

A fairly correct conception of the thoroughness of this attempt at a science of religion may be had from the fact that 359 pages in all are devoted to a host of difficult and complicated questions in no fewer than forty-eight separate chapters! This is an average of somewhat more than seven pages to each topic. We would by no means deny the possibility of compressing no little historical research, and even inductive proof of scientifically determined laws, into so small a space. But the exceedingly sketchy and second-hand character of the historical treatment is no less manifest than are the correspondingly slight foundations upon which the boldest generalizations of laws are made. More and more, as it seems to us, is the now old-fashioned science of civilization and its cognate study of anthropology, with its classification of “ages” according to the uses of the metals, or by some other equally arbitrary standard, proving its incompetency to handle the material in any truly scientific way. We have even less faith in the conclusions similarly gathered and woven into a so-called science of religion.

Perhaps no more effective way of briefly setting forth the nature of the conclusions at which M. Réthoré arrives can be followed than to quote the titles of several of the chapters. These titles themselves leave the author’s opinions in no equivocal shape. They sound like

voices from a Daniel come to judgment in condemnation of views which a large portion of the modern Christian world, and that certainly not the most ignorant and immoral, has cherished as having almost the place of self-evident historical and experimental truth. Here are some selections from a group of similar titles: Section III, chapter xii, "Christianity has borrowed from preceding religions its ritual, its festivals, and its ecclesiastical organization;" section IV, chapter iii, "The conception of God, under Christian sacerdotalism, leads to atheism and irreligion;" chapter v, "The sacerdotal religions have falsified theoretical morality;" chapter viii, "The Christian theories of grace, of predestination, and of the eternity of punishment, have compromised the doctrine of immortality;" chapter x, "Christianity has constantly been opposed to the development of reason" (proved in three pages); chapter xi, "Christianity has been opposed to the experimental sciences;" chapter xii, "Christianity has not regenerated the world; it has even falsified practical morality."

In few words, and to hear the conclusion of the whole matter, the Semitic religions of Judaism and Christianity have been, and still are, the chief enemies of the true and natural religion; and, as well, the chief enemies of the welfare and progress of the race. Even the latter is giving way, is tottering to its fall. But "beside this fatal tree there grows a young plant, watered with the tears and often with the blood of sages from the beginning of time." This is a natural theism which is destined to replace Judaism and Christianity.

Comment is unnecessary. But we are moved to ask the simple question: "Is, then, history about to repeat itself? Is Voltairism about again to take possession of the so-called educated classes in France; and is what once followed to follow yet again in the opinions and deeds of the nation?"

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**BUDDHISM, ITS HISTORY AND LITERATURE**, being the American Lectures on the History of Religions. First Series, 1894-5. By T. W. RHYS DAVIDS, LL.D., PH.D. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1896.

THESE lectures, delivered in various centers of the United States, by a great Pali scholar, under the auspices of a recently formed American association, are much the same, in substance and form, as the